Some Do Not Hear Opportunity When She Knocks Because They Are Knocking At The Time

Opportunity

THERE is a gray-bearded maxim, honored on account of its venerable age, which runs thus: "Opportunity knocks once at each man's door." John J. Ingalls once went a-sonneting around this proverb, and some say he wrote the finest sonnet ever written by an American. I am inclined to think this is so; and if it is, it proves for us that truth is one thing and poetry another.

The actual fact is that in this day opportunity not only knocks at your door, but is playing an anvil chorus on every man's door, and lays for the owner around the corner with a club. The world is in sore need of men who can do things. Indeed, cases can easily be recalled by every one where opportunity actually smashed in the

door and collared her candidate and dragged him forth to success ☙ These cases are exceptional; usually you have to go out and meet opportunity ☙ But the only way you can get away from opportunity is to lie down and die. Opportunity does not trouble dead men, nor dead ones who flatter themselves that they are alive.

Let no man repine on account of lack of early advantages. Rare-ripes run away from advantages—they can not digest them. "If I had my say I would set all young folks at work and send the old ones to school," said Socrates, 420 B. C.

What Socrates meant was that after you have battled a bit with actual life and begun to feel your need for education, you are, for the first time, ready to take advantage of your opportunities and learn.

Education is a matter of desire. An education can not be imparted. It has to be won and you win by working.

And this fact also holds: The best educated men are those who get their brain develop-

ment out of their daily work, or at the time they are doing the work. Quitting work in order to get an education was the idea of a monk who fled from the world because he thought it was bad; a fallacy we have partially outgrown. It takes work to get an education; it takes work to use it, and it takes work to keep it.

The great blunder of the colleges is that they have lifted men out of life in order to educate them for life. All educated college men know this and acknowledge it.

In his last annual report President Eliot of Harvard made a strong appeal to parents to get their children into the practical world of life as soon as possible, and not expect a college degree to insure success.

Those who want to grow and evolve should not give too much time to the latest novel and daily paper. Don't spread yourself out thin. Concentrate on a few things—the very best educated men do not know everything.

¶ Choose what you will be and then get at it. You 'll win.

If you quit, it simply shows you did not want an education; you only thought you did—you are not willing to pay the price. ¶ The other day in the Michigan State Penitentiary at Jackson, I saw in a convict's cell three architect's designs tacked on the wall, and on a shelf were several books from a correspondence school. "Is it possible," I asked Dr. Pray, the prison doctor, "that a convict is taking a correspondence course in architecture?" "Not only that," was the reply, "but a good many of our men are studying hard to better their mental condition. This particular man has gotten beyond the amateur stage You see he has been working at his course for three years. He draws plans for us and is doing work for parties outside." Then we hunted up the man and found him in the marble shop. He seemed pleased to know that I had noticed his work. "You see," he said, "I only work six hours a day for the state, and after that my time is my own, and I try to improve it; there are no bowling alleys, pool

rooms, nor saloons here—no place to go." And he smiled. I tried to, but could not—my eyes were filled with tears A convict getting a practical education, and so many of us who think we are free, frittering away our time.

If, in its anxiety to present itself, opportunity will break into jail, surely those outside can not complain of opportunity's lack of persistence in hunting out the ready and willing.